{In Archive} Re: injection well question-Reply

Larry Wright to: Ray Leissner

07/07/2008 10:11 AM

From: Larry Wright/R6/USEPA/US

To: Ray Leissner/R6/USEPA/US@EPA

Archive: This message is being viewed in an archive.

Ray, good reply. Thanks.

Ray Leissner/R6/USEPA/US



Ray Leissner/R6/USEPA/US

07/07/2008 09:33 AM

To texas jw@yahoo.com

cc Diane Smith/R6/USEPA/US@EPA, LaGayla Bradley/R6/USEPA/US@EPA

Subject injection well question-Reply

EPA Region 6 Internet Feedback (http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6)

Original Message: I received notification today that the adjoining land owner has made applic= ation for an injection well site. I have heard both pro's and Con's concern= ing these wells. I personally think that they are pretty safe, but just on = the outset that something went wrong, I was wondering what would be the big= gest threat of contamination of ground water, as I would like to have my we= II tested at this time to rule out any pre-existing contamination. I would = appreciate any help you could offer... Thank you, JOHN MINTER

Response by EPA:

Mr. Minter:

My name is Ray Leissner. I am with the Environmental Protection Agency's underground injection control (UIC) program. I oversee the Railroad Commission of Texas' (RRC) UIC program. You have asked some very good questions in your email below to which I wish to offer a response.

Your opinion that injection is pretty safe is well founded. That is not to say it is without risks. If the operator remains compliant with the RRC's UIC program then the well will never cause a problem with ground water contamination. This is the case with the vast majority of injection wells in Texas. It has been my experience that the contamination that has occurred around injection well facilities is largely due to surface spills, broken pipelines, inadequate containment and sloppy housekeeping. The injection well is usually constructed with two to three redundant levels of protection and monitoring to prevent injected fluids from escaping into fresh water aquifers. Hence the injection well is very unlikely to cause harm.

Your proposal to have your water well's water quality tested is also a very good idea. By doing this you can be assured of recognizing any contamination that might occur as a result of the new facility's activities or that might be preexisting. Either way, it is a good idea. Lately many citizens and ground water conservation districts (GWCD) have recognized the value in pre-drilling or pre-injection sampling activities and have negotiated terms with the injection well applicant to have their water sources tested and/or periodically monitored in exchange for dropping their protests to the application. The testing is beneficial for both parties in that it confirms the water quality before any activities occur that might impact it. If you have a local GWCD, I would approach them with your thoughts. The GWCD or perhaps your county health department may be able to assist you in identifying what contaminants should tested for and what laboratories are available in your area for that purpose. Some fairly common contaminants that are tested for include: chlorides, total dissolved solids, total petroleum hydrocarbons, benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, xylene, barium and coliform. It is advisable that the sample be collected and analyized by a

certified lab.

I hope you find this response helpful. You may contact me at 214-665-7183 if you wish to discuss this matter further. Thank you.